

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JOHN D. MORTON

HON. BEN CHANDLER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero. SFC John D. Morton made the ultimate sacrifice when he gave his life in Afghanistan while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. John was not only a courageous soldier, but a dearly loved father, brother, son and friend. It is with heartfelt sadness and my deepest sympathies that I stand before you and pay homage to a true defender of freedom.

As a senior at Powell County High School, SFC John Morton felt the call of duty and enlisted in the United States Army. His service to our country sent him all over the world—Somalia, Haiti, Iraq and Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Surveillance), 173rd Airborne Brigade based in Vicenza, Italy.

On December 15, 2005, John's patrol was on a mission in the mountainous area around Kandahar, Afghanistan when they were confronted by Taliban fighters. John suffered a fatal wound to the chest. On December 28, 2005, SFC John Morton was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

John had a strong commitment to his country and to the uniform that he wore. He believed in his mission in Afghanistan and in the war in Iraq. Along with being an American soldier, John was a beloved father and husband. It is with grief, sadness and humility that I thank John's parents and two sisters. I also wish to thank John's wife, Sarah, and his three children Joshua, Scarlett and Olivia for making the ultimate sacrifice.

John's death is a great loss to the state of Kentucky, to our country, but most of all, to the entire Morton family. I know in my heart that SFC John Morton will always be remembered as an American hero.

PROTESTS AT MILITARY FUNERALS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, approximately 138,000 troops are serving in Iraq and hundreds of thousands more are stationed at bases all over the world. These men and women bravely volunteered to serve their country and fight to preserve the democratic ideals we as Americans hold dear. It is because of them and the sacrifices they make, I rise today to bring attention to a very serious issue.

On a rainy November day in my district, a group of protesters gathered at the funeral of SGT Kyle Wehrly—the first resident of Galesburg, IL to die in Iraq. During the funeral, they shouted cruel, hateful words at the mourners. Upon hearing the protesters might show up at the funeral, a group of students from Knox College in Galesburg organized to silently stand in front of the protesters, raising their umbrellas to block the hateful words and plac-

ards from the family members and friends of Sergeant Wehrly.

In response to the emotionally charged and widespread attention this incident and other similar protests brought to the State, Illinois Lieutenant Governor, Pat Quinn, proposed a new law preventing protests at funeral services throughout the State. The Let Them Rest in Peace Act prohibits protests within a 300-foot zone around any funeral or memorial in Illinois from 30 minutes before a service until 30 minutes after. "No grieving military family should be subjected to vile epithets and signs at the funeral service of their loved one who has made the ultimate sacrifice for our country," Quinn said in a recent press release. "This legislation strikes an important balance between the First Amendment religious rights of families to bury their dead with reverence and the expression rights of those seeking to harass mourners at a funeral service."

I wholeheartedly support free speech and the right of every American to exercise that right. I also strongly believe the rights of families privately mourning the loss of loved ones are violated and the contributions of our fallen military heroes are belittled when funerals are targeted for picketing and other public demonstrations. Picketing of funerals only cause emotional disturbance and distress to grieving families, which is why I support the Lieutenant Governor's proposal. The Let Them Rest in Peace Act allows family members to peacefully mourn while preserving free speech. Under the Lieutenant Governor's law, people can still protest, they just have to do it from 300 feet away.

I commend the students of Knox College for the decency they showed the family and friends of Sergeant Wehrly by peacefully and silently creating a barrier between them and the hateful, painful words of the protesters. I hope their actions help bring further attention to this issue so we can better honor our men and women in uniform, while continuing to uphold our treasured first amendment rights.

TRIBUTE TO A TRUE AMERICAN HERO, DURWARD LEE "SWEDE" REYMAN

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American hero, Durward Lee "Swede" Reyman. Swede quit high school a week after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, at the age of 18. He volunteered to join the Army Air Corps to protect and defend the country he dearly loves.

After serving in various locations in the United States he was trained for Arctic Search and Rescue and was sent to serve 1 year in northern Quebec, Canada, where he was responsible for driving sled dogs. Upon returning to the States he volunteered for the paratroops and was assigned to the Army Parachute Infantry. He completed jump training in February of 1945 in Fort Benning, GA. Swede was then sent to the Pacific as part of the 11th Airborne, 188th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Battalion where he made a combat jump on Luzon Island in the Philippines. Swede made a total of seven jumps during his time in the military.

Following the drop of atomic bombs in Japan in 1945, Swede's unit was the first to set foot in the country of Japan. They served as the Honor Guard for GEN Douglas MacArthur during his arrival in Japan.

Following the war, Swede returned home and married his sweetheart Hope, and together they raised four sons, D.L. Junior, William Craig, James Mark, and Jeffrey Charles. Jeffery served 4 years in the United States Air Force.

Swede has been actively involved in ceremonies marking the anniversaries of World War II events. He went to France for the 50th anniversary of D-Day in June 1994 and made a jump with several other WWII survivors. Additionally he made jumps in Russia and Australia in 1995 in ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of V-E Day.

Swede's favorite phrase that he says to himself daily is "They gave their tomorrows for our todays." He doesn't know who to attribute this quote to, but he states that it always makes him think of the cemeteries full of veterans who died and were buried far from home. They had bravely fought and died for our freedoms.

Today I am proud to honor Swede for his courage, patriotism, and service to our Nation. He helped protect our democracy and kept our homeland safe by placing his life on the line. Swede truly is the embodiment of all the values that have molded America into the great Nation it is today.

Mr. Speaker, we maintain the blessings of our freedoms only because we have citizens like Swede Reyman who are willing to fight to defend them for us. It is for these reasons Swede deserves the very highest praise and deep appreciation from the residents of Colorado and from this esteemed body.

HONORING PETER M. AYLWARD

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker I rise today to honor a great soldier, a great husband, a great father and a great American—soon-to-be BG Peter M. Aylward.

This Friday, February 17, 2006, my good friend COL Peter Aylward will be promoted to the rank of brigadier general. Peter is currently serving as the joint staff and deputy director for Anti-Terrorism, Force Protection and Homeland Defense. Peter has served our country in many ways including being a member of the White House Task Force for Disaster Reduction and Tsunami Warning and Planning and led the DOD Pandemic Influenza Task Force for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense.

As 1 of 11 children, Peter is a Massachusetts native who began his illustrious military career in 1976 when he enlisted in the 1/26 Cavalry Squadron as a reconnaissance specialist. Peter earned multiple degrees from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, a masters from the Marine Corp University and a master's degree from the National Defense University. He has served in a variety of command and staff assignments and won multiple honors and medals including the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Defense